



# Georgia Perimeter College

## INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Georgia Perimeter College (GPC) is a multi-campus institution offering on-site and distance learning opportunities to the highly diverse populations that live in DeKalb, Newton, and neighboring metro-Atlanta counties. The college is committed not only to its role as the major provider of associate's degrees and transfer opportunities in the state but also to its partnership with the DeKalb County School System through the Early College Programs that offer access to higher education for well-qualified high school students.

In fiscal year 2015 (fall 2014), the college had a total enrollment of approximately 21,371 students, an increase of 1.2% over the previous year. There were 1,306 (6.1%) students who were dual enrolled or in an early college program. An additional 7,128 (33.6%) were adult learners, which is approximately the same number as were enrolled in fall of 2013. This demonstrates the range of generational diversity that continues to exist at the college, and the multiple methods of communication required to meet the students' needs. Another 9,613 (45.3%) students were first generation, and 5,009 (23.6%) were international with 3,948 (18.6%) identified as immigrants and 1,061 (5.0%) as non-immigrants.

Many students require financial aid to attend GPC; for example, 9,483 (44.7%) were Pell Grant recipients, and 1,650 (7.8%) were Hope Scholarship recipients. In total, 13,540 (64%) of all students at GPC were on some form of financial aid.

Many of the 13,270 (62.6%) part-time students had significant responsibilities and family commitments limiting the number of courses they could take in a semester. In addition to attending part time, many students address time limitations resulting from personal and work commitments by taking classes online. While 8,065 (38.0%) students took at least one class online, nearly half of them, 3,988 (18.8%), only took classes online.

With the statewide transformation of remediation, Georgia Perimeter College has a smaller population of students taking Learning Support classes than it had prior to the changes in regulations. However, the college still had 2,364 (11.1%) students taking one or more remedial classes, which is 3.7% decrease in this population over last year. The vast majority of the students in remedial classes, 2,158 (10.2%), were enrolled in math and 381 (1.8%) in English. Additionally, GPC has a strong international population with 729 (3.4%) students enrolled in English as a Second Language classes, which is a 6.3% decrease in enrollment for the ESL classes over the previous year.

Most of the students attending Georgia Perimeter College have at least one, if not multiple, risk factors that may prevent them from completing their degree program. These factors include, but are not limited to, first-generation college student, economic status, part-time attendance, full-time employment, and single parenthood. To provide better guidance to graduation for this at-risk population, the college established Program Maps to delineate the recommended course sequence for a student to complete a degree program in two years. Furthermore, the college encouraged full-time students to complete 15 hours each semester in order to graduate in four semesters. As part of the college's commitment to reducing time to degree completion, part-time students, approximately 64% of the total student population who take fewer than 12 credit hours in a semester, were also encouraged to increase the number of courses they took each semester. Time to completion is one of the greatest risk factors attributed to a student not graduating. Therefore, many of the college's projects focused on getting students to take more classes each semester and on providing them with the necessary support to help them be successful with an increased academic course load.

The college recognizes that getting students accustomed to the academic rigor of college early increases their ability to succeed, especially if the student is the first in his or her family to attend college. The Early College Programs that enable high school students to earn high school and college credit simultaneously, thereby reducing the time needed to complete a college degree, are a priority for the college. Exposing students to collegiate-level work, along with providing a strong academic support infrastructure while they are still in high school, prepares them for success when they start college full time.

Recognizing that many students at the college need assistance in science, engineering, and mathematics, GPC has made support for STEM education a priority through numerous initiatives and grants, including the creation of a full-time STEM coordinator position.

GPC created key initiatives that provided timely communication and intervention for students who were in academic peril. The college implemented a proactive and timely academic alert system to improve student success. This advising system does not wait for students to access the support resources they need. Instead it provides the structure and mechanism by which college faculty and staff initiate contact with students in an effort to provide academic assistance to enhance their chances of success in their coursework.

**INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS, HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES**

<b>High-impact strategy</b>	Early College and Dual Enrollment Initiatives
<b>Related Goal</b>	<b>Goal 6:</b> Shorten time to degree completion through programs that allow students to earn college credit while still in high school.
<b>Summary of Activities</b>	<p>GPC had more than 1,142 dual enrollment high school students, which represents a 10% increase over the previous year, who completed 11,981 credits worth of college-level courses, which can be applied to degrees at matriculation into an institution of higher education. The most popular courses are English and math, but a wide range of courses that satisfy core requirements for most degree programs are offered.</p> <p>In addition to dual enrollment, the DeKalb Early College Academy (DECA) is operated jointly with the DeKalb County School District (DCSD). The focus of the program is on those students of high ability as demonstrated by past performance on standardized tests and classroom effort. Students from any middle school in DCSD may apply in the 8th grade to join DECA. In addition to the college preparatory curriculum, students can receive up to 60 hours of college credit leading to an Associate of Arts degree. Students spend the 9th and 10th grades at the Academy location and the 11th and 12th grades taking classes at GPC. The program is designed to accommodate 400 students in grades 9 through 12. Of those students, 164 are on a GPC campus, and they completed 4,057 credit hours of college level course work in FY 15.</p>
<b>Baseline Status</b>	In FY 2009 the college had approximately 884 students in the Dual Enrollment program and DeKalb Early College Academy.
<b>Interim Measures of Progress</b>	<p>The college continues to expand the Dual Enrollment program and seeks opportunities to serve additional high schools. The total number of high school students taking courses at the college in FY 15 was 1,306, which represents 20% of all dual enrolled students within the university system of Georgia.</p> <p>The students in DECA graduate on time at a rate that is greater than 90%, which is far above the state average of 71% and the DCSD rate of 62%. Additionally, students acquire significant college credit with 30 students receiving their associate’s degree last year at the end of their high school career. However, due to resource considerations, it is not possible to significantly increase the number of students in this program, and for the next few years, it is likely to continue at its current size.</p>
<b>Measures of Success</b>	<p>Students in Dual Enrollment and DECA pass their classes with a C or better at a rate greater than 97%, earning more than 16,038 hours of college credit. The total monetary value of this credit depends upon the college to which each student matriculates, but estimating a tuition rate of \$100 per credit hour, which is approximately the lowest rate for state colleges in Georgia, this represents \$1,603,800 saved by the families of these students in tuition costs. GPC believes the Dual Enrollment program can grow by 10% per year with the passage of the Move on When Ready law, which provides payment of tuition, mandatory fees, and required books for the student. This new law will make college attendance more accessible to qualified high school students by reducing their cost.</p> <p>DECA has won numerous awards for excellence. It has been a Platinum and Gold Award Winner for Student Achievement. More than 90% of all students graduating through this program enter college after completing high school, and most of them will complete a bachelor’s degree within four years of entering college. Additionally, 30 students completed their AA degree along with receiving their high school diploma.</p>
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<p>Academically prepared students who are provided an opportunity to experience college while still in high school benefit from the experience in a number of ways. Most importantly, they are able to complete general education requirements before matriculation, allowing them to take courses within their major earlier. This opportunity creates scheduling options, which allow students to take advantage of specialized programs, such as, internships, study abroad, and second majors, to enhance the educational experience while remaining on the pathway to graduate on time.</p> <p>DeKalb Early College Academy has shown that given support and direction motivated high school students can be successful in a college environment regardless of the challenges of their circumstances. Success in DECA translates into continued success in college with nearly all of the students completing bachelor’s degrees on time and many going onto graduate and professional schools.</p>

High-impact Intrusive Advising Initiatives

strategy

Related Goal

**Goal 4:** Provide intentional advising to keep students on track to graduate

Summary of Activities

The college developed a proactive advising program known as the Performance Alert for Student Success or PASS, which provided early and ongoing updates to students who may be in danger of failing or of performing poorly in a class. Based on designated core concepts that have been identified by members of the course curriculum committee, a central computer system issues an alert at three different points throughout the term apprising students of their status in mastering key concepts for the class. The first occurs within a few weeks of the start of the semester, which allows the instructor to identify early those students who need intervention before the first assessment occurs and gives students time to access college resources to gain mastery of the key concepts before the first major exam or assignment. The remaining alerts occur at strategic times in the semester to inform those students that they are missing key concepts or skills prior to exams or assignments that count significantly towards their grade. Instructors direct students to the appropriate resources that will best meet their needs for academic success. Additionally, advisors meet with students who are identified as struggling, assess the barriers to success, and create a plan of action to give these students the best chance of success.

Baseline Status

The college will measure the effectiveness of this program by looking at the success rates of the students who have received alerts. Since academic year 2015 is the first year of this program it will be used as the baseline for this program and the intervention activities related to it.

Interim Measures of Progress

During spring semester of 2015 the college issued an alert to 13,399 different students whose performance on an assessment indicated that they did not fully grasp a key concept in one or more of their classes and were in danger of earning a D or F.

Measures of Success

The college lacks a historical foundation from which to draw significant empirical conclusions since this initiative was only in effect during fall 2014 and spring 2015; however, the statistical trend seems to indicate that the overall impact of this initiative was positive. For example, of the 20,301 alerts sent out during spring 2015, 11,820 resulted in a student earning a C or higher in the specified course.

Lessons Learned

The PASS alerts provided students with useful information concerning their understanding of important concepts and strengthened communication between the instructor and his/her students. Issuing the alerts before major assessments spurred many students to seek help before the instructor's exam, which improved their grades on the exams. Moreover, providing multiple warnings several times over the course of the semester kept students focused on their grasp of certain skills or concepts as well as their overall performance in the class. Not only were students warned by the third week of behaviors that might put them at risk, but also students who began strong in the class but exhibited unsatisfactory progress by week six or seven were identified and offered remediation.

Important to making the PASS program work effectively is the identification of the core concepts that students must master to succeed. These core concepts or benchmarks were identified by the faculty and assessment instruments were created to measure the students' grasp of them. The faculty are now reviewing the data from the PASS alerts to ensure essential concepts are being identified and that the assessment instruments are reliable measures of the students' understanding of them. This review will improve the PASS program and lead to an increase in the number of students performing at a passing level in their courses.

<b>High-impact strategy</b>	<b>Guided Pathways to Success</b>
<b>Related Goal</b>	<b>Goal 2:</b> Increase the number of degrees that are earned “on time” (associate’s degree in 2 years, bachelor’s degree in 4 years).
<b>Summary of Activities</b>	<p>GPC created Program Maps for all programs of study; these maps provide students with the recommended course selection for each term to complete their AA in four semesters. Program Maps are available on the college website and through the advising offices. Advisors encourage part-time students to take as close to 15 hours as possible each semester, taking into consideration their personal and work commitments.</p> <p>Part-time program maps are currently being developed, which will provide a clear path to graduation for students taking 9 hours per semester. The college has adopted a strategy of encouraging part-time students, who make up 63% of the population, to take at least 9 hours per semester. This will put a part-time student on track to graduate within 6 semesters, which is significantly fewer than the current average of 8 terms required of students to complete an associate’s degree.</p> <p>The Program Maps have been added to DegreeWorks, the college’s online advising platform. While the Program Maps assist students in planning their semester schedule early in their college career, DegreeWorks monitors a student’s progress toward degree completion by tracking the courses completed, those in progress, and the ones still needed for the declared program of study or major.</p> <p>Additionally, the college held a graduation fair that identified students who have more than 55 hours of credit. A graduation audit was performed for all of these students, and they were invited to meet with an advisor to complete an application for graduation if they had already met the requirements or to identify the remaining classes needed to be eligible to graduate. This process will be repeated each semester as a way of reaching out to students who have successfully completed a significant amount of course work but may not realize that they are close to graduating or even that they have fulfilled all degree requirements.</p>
<b>Baseline Status</b>	A comparison of the percentage of students taking 6 or 7 hours to the percentage taking 9 or 10 will be tracked. Additionally, A comparison of the percentage of students taking 12 or 13 hours to the percentage taking 15 or 16 will be tracked. As a baseline, the college is using data from 2014 where 22.1% of the students took 6 or 7 hours; 17.9% took 9 or 10 hours; 26.3% took 12 or 13 hours; and 6.12% took 15 or 16 hours.
<b>Interim Measures of Progress</b>	<p>The number of students who access DegreeWorks will be tracked, which will provide a measure of how effective communication has been.</p> <p>The college invited 1,700 students to meet with an advisor to discuss graduation during the graduation fair, and advisors met with 365 students.</p>
<b>Measures of Success</b>	<p>The college has seen an increase of 5% in the number of students taking 9 or 10 credit hours of course work, and a decrease of 3% in the number of students taking 15 or more hours. The total number of full-time students, defined as 12 hours or more, also decreased over last year.</p> <p>Additionally, as a result of the graduation fair, the college saw an increase of 242 students applying for graduation during the spring 2015 semester compared to spring 2014. This represents a 42% increase in the number of students applying for graduation during the comparable time periods.</p>
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<p>Changing the culture of the students to embrace taking additionally classes is ambitious, but the college has made a good start at changing this message. The college has added the position of Coordinator of Social Media Strategies and College Completion, to enhance its completion messaging to students through multiple means including the use of social media, mobile device applications, and college website as well as other channels.</p> <p>Degreeworks is proving to be very popular with students as a tool for tracking their progress. However, there is a continued need to inform students about Degreeworks to ensure all incoming students are made aware of it and to make this tool an integrated part of the college advising process. The college is looking to increase the number of access points on campus for student use of Degreeworks.</p> <p>The graduation fair showed that there is a significant number of students who need help in recognizing that they have finished or are close to finishing degrees. While many of the programs at the college are focused upon getting incoming students started correctly and keeping them on track for graduation, there is also a demonstrated need to help them recognize that they have completed or are very close to fulfilling degree requirements. Additionally, the graduation fair revealed that many students are informed about the requirements for attending the senior institution to</p>

which they wish to transfer but have not educated themselves about the requirements for and value of the associate's degree. The college sees an opportunity to significantly increase graduation numbers by working with students more intrusively as they near the completion of their degrees

<b>High-impact strategy</b>	<b>Supplemental Instruction</b>
<b>Related Goal</b>	<b>Goal 8:</b> Restructure instructional delivery to support educational excellence and student success.
<b>Summary of Activities</b>	<p>Supplemental instruction was provided in select general chemistry and college algebra courses. A student who had passed the course previously attends the regular lectures and then offers additional instruction to students in another arranged setting. During the supplemental instruction session, the lead student provides additional review and time for the enrolled students to grasp the concepts presented. The lead student is generally viewed as a peer by the enrolled students and hence is more likely to be asked questions.</p> <p>Other activities supported by GPC are those designed to support student success in science, engineering, and mathematics and to promote interest in these fields among students of ability who belong to underrepresented populations. These programs encourage students' interests in the STEM areas and support their success in the required courses. Activities include summer research opportunities at universities and laboratories, participation in science competitions, and opportunities for tutoring, additional instruction, and mentoring.</p> <p>The four specialized STEM programs that are available to students at the college are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One (1) University System of Georgia -funded program which provides resources for faculty to conduct research and to students to engage in co-educational activities:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Three (3) National Science Foundation-funded programs which provide students with scholarships, exposure to professionals in their fields of study and opportunities to conduct research at some of the top research institutions in Georgia and around the country:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Educate and Nurture Leadership in STEM (ENLISTEM)</li> <li>○ Peach State Louis Stoke Alliance for Minority Participation (PSLSAMP)</li> <li>○ STEM Talent Expansion Program (STEP)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Baseline Status</b>	Students taking advantage of the opportunity for supplemental instruction will have their performance compared to their peers in the same course who did not attend and with students in sections of the same course who did not have the option of supplemental instruction.
<b>Interim Measures of Progress</b>	<p>There were approximately 115 students in 18 classes who took advantage of the supplemental instruction during the last academic year. The college has learned from this experience and looks to expand its offerings in the upcoming year with the hiring in January of a full-time coordinator for this initiative, who will move the program from the pilot stage to an operational phase.</p> <p>Last year, 113 students participated in one or more of the STEM programs, which represents 10.3% of all students at GPC eligible to participate, approximately the same percentage of eligible students who participated the previous year. These students had an average GPA of 3.3 and were predominantly from populations underrepresented in the STEM fields.</p>
<b>Measures of Success</b>	<p>Students receiving supplemental instruction this past year performed better than students who did not receive it, but too few students have been part of the program to be able to make definitive statements concerning how much improvement in performance has resulted from the use of supplemental instruction. GPC increased its support for supplemental instruction by adding a full time coordinator, who is recruiting supplemental instruction leaders, and monitoring the effectiveness of the overall program. The addition of the coordinator will allow GPC to increase the number of sections of supplemental instruction that are available to students by 50% and add additional subjects that are served by supplemental instruction.</p> <p>GPC has seen a significant increase in the numbers of students receiving an associate's degree in STEM fields. Students studying in a STEM field are more likely than others to transfer to a four year institution without completing an AA degree. However, through GPC's support programs, Academic Year 2014 had a 41% increase in the number of associate's degrees (171) awarded over Academic Year 2011. Of the</p>

students who earned STEM degrees, 75 were from underrepresented minority populations, which is a 47% increase over the previous year and 71 were women, which is a 7.5% increase over the previous year.

**Lessons Learned** Supplemental instruction requires effective leadership in order to be successful and organized. The addition of a full-time coordinator to lead this program at the college has had an immediate effect of increasing the interest in the program and expanding the number of classes in which this is being offered. It will be important to continue to expand the administrative support for this program as the number of students and classes that are a part of supplemental instruction increase.

A limiting factor to the expansion of supplemental instruction at GPC is the constant need to train new leaders as successful students graduate and transfer. It is the nature of two-year college that qualified leaders graduate and transfer after serving only one year.

There has been significant success in helping students complete their AA degree in the STEM fields. The numbers of graduates have steadily increased, and these graduates continue to represent a greater diversity than the national average in these areas. GPC continues to focus efforts upon students in these fields through its programs and is the leader in the state for the number of minority and women STEM students educated.

<b>High-impact strategy</b>	<b>Transforming Remediation</b>
<b>Related Goal</b>	<b>Goal 7:</b> Increase the likelihood of degree completion by transforming the way that remediation is accomplished.
<b>Summary of Activities</b>	The college redesigned Learning Support classes to reduce the number of levels of courses from two to one. Additionally, GPC will pilot the placement of some Learning Support students in collegiate math and English classes with co-requisite support labs. Such programs implemented at other colleges have shown a dramatic increase in the rates of success for students while having the added benefit of earning collegiate credit.
<b>Baseline Status</b>	The base line data is the percentage of students moving from Learning Support math courses into collegiate level in 2012, which was the last year before major reform occurred. In this year 20% of the students moved from learning support math to college level.
<b>Interim Measures of Progress</b>	The number of students moving from Learning Support mathematics into collegiate-level math in one semester has increased from 20%, in fall of 2012 to 55.2%, in fall of 2014. For English, there has not been a measurable increase, but the number of students in Learning Support English has been substantially reduced as a result of recent changes in statewide standards for admission, thus making it difficult to compare populations.
<b>Measures of Success</b>	Ultimately, GPC will see more students who started in Learning Support completing degrees in fewer semesters. This data is inconclusive as of yet, since most of the students are part-time and would not be expected to have graduated until spring of 2016. GPC increased the fall-to-fall retention rate from 43.7% for 2012 to 2013 to 47.6% for 2013-2014.
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	Moving to the Emporium style model for developmental mathematics has shown a significant increase in student performance. The model provides students with more time on task in using mathematics and developing these skills. GPC piloted the planned co-requisite model for English in the spring in preparation for full implementation in the fall of 2015. While the number of classes that were offered was small, these pilots gave the faculty an opportunity to test the new delivery method and to prepare for the larger roll- out of the courses. The pass rate in the pilot courses was about 50%, and the faculty hope to improve on this during the next year when the model is fully implemented.

**OBSERVATIONS:**

GPC has had success with a number of its strategies and continues to look for opportunities to expand them. The DECA program continues to be an exceptionally successful program: however, its capacity is limited to approximately 100 students at each grade level, and it is not feasible for any significant expansion in the near future. Our Dual Enrollment program is also highly successful reaching a large number of students who are able to complete a significant number of college courses while in high school and reducing their time to degree completion. The college expects that

the recently enacted Move on When Ready legislation, which reduces the cost to the high school students taking college courses, will spur a larger increase in the size of this program over last year. We expect that this program will continue to be one of the greatest successes for the college Complete College Georgia plan.

GPC implemented a modification of the early alert program for several reasons. First, the early alert has not been occurring early enough in the semester, and second, students can get off track at several critical points during the semester even though they may have made a good start. The new academic alert system issued a warning throughout the term based on benchmark assessments or a student's performance on core concepts that are specific to each course and developed by course curriculum committees. The student's inability to master one or more of these concepts serves as a predictor of his or her ability to be successful in that course. An assessment of these core concepts is made at three appropriate points during the semester and immediate intervention occurs if a student does not demonstrate mastery. Performance Alert for Student Success (PASS) data indicates that this ongoing monitoring of students' mastery of key concepts has increased successful course completion rates of those receiving alerts.

GPC has used strategic data to launch intrusive advising programs that target specific groups of students who can be affected quickly and meaningfully. The success of the graduation fair initiative demonstrates how effective targeted messages can be in increasing the number of graduates. Moving forward GPC will have a graduation outreach each semester to move students from credit accumulation to graduation. Additionally, the newly developed first-year experience class will focus upon high risk populations getting the students to plan a complete program to graduation. Further, initiatives directed to helping students with specific messages are being developed and will result in an increased number of student graduating from GPC. The goal is to increase the number of students graduating by 25% over the current year.

The *15 to Finish* program continues to be a major focus of efforts at the college. While more than 60% of the students attend part-time, the college continues its efforts to educate students on the importance of taking enough classes to finish on time. Program maps have been created and distributed to students showing how a student can complete a degree in two years. Data shows that more GPC students take 12 hours per semester than the 15 they need to graduate in two years. The college will continue its education program to encourage students to take one more class per semester and graduate in two years. Additionally, another set of program maps are being created that will show how a part-time student can complete in three years by taking 9 hours a semester. The college recognizes that not all students can take a full-time load but will continue to emphasize the importance of students having a plan to graduate in a timely manner.

There has been significant success in helping students complete their AA degree in the STEM fields. The numbers of graduates have steadily increased, and these graduates continue to represent a greater diversity than the national average in these areas. GPC continues to focus efforts upon students in these fields through its programs.

The college continues to grow in experience in its use of supplemental instruction, however has not seen significant success in this program due to an inability to recruit and sustain a core of student leaders, because most students graduate within a year of joining. A coordinator for the program was hired in January of 2015 to try to recruit more student leaders, provide training and stabilize the number of available student leaders, but by nature of a two-year college this will continue to be a challenge.

It was announced in January that GPC will be consolidated into Georgia State University in January 2016. All of the initiatives at the college follow a similar philosophy as those at Georgia State University, but the consolidation will entail a review that may result in changes to some of the initiatives as they exist. Additionally, Perimeter College, as a unit of Georgia State University, will have access to a significant increase in resources for data analytics post consolidation. These additional resources will enable the college to increase the annual number of graduates.

GPC continues to assess the effectiveness of its many activities, which support the Complete College Georgia priorities. Modifications are made in response to data to enhance current activities and initiate new opportunities. GPC is proud of what has been accomplished over the past year and looks forward to continuing its efforts on behalf of its students to build the educated workforce required by Georgia companies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.